

To: District Superintendents
County Superintendents

Re: Rural Education Initiative (ESEA Title VI Part B)

Under the newly reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (or ESEA), Title VI Part B is the Rural Education Initiative (REI) but it is commonly cited as the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP). Regardless of your acronym preference -- REI or REAP -- the program is intended to provide flexibility in how certain federal funds may be used as well as to provide additional funds for eligible small rural school districts.

REAP has two subparts. Subpart 1 is the Small Rural Schools (SRS) program and Subpart 2 is the Rural Low Income (RLI) Schools program.

Subpart 1 Small Rural Schools (SRS)

Eligibility -- Eligible LEAs are those that: (a) have an average daily attendance (ADA) of less than 600 or serve only schools located in counties with a population density of fewer than 10 persons per square mile, and (b) serve only schools with an NCES locale code of 7 or 8.

Flexibility -- Subpart 1 allows eligible LEAs to use the federal funds it receives under four separate programs (specifically, programs funded under Title II Part A Teacher Quality; Title II Part D Educational Technology; Title IV Part A Safe and Drug-Free Schools; and Title V Part A Innovative Programs) for activities under any or all of the following programs: Title I Part A; Title II Part A Teacher Quality; Title II Part D Educational Technology; Title III Language Instruction; Title IV Part A Safe and Drug-Free Schools; Title IV Part B 21st Century Community Learning Centers; and Title V Part A Innovative Programs. An LEA must participate in a given title before it can use REAP/SRS funds for activities under that title.

Funding -- New for school year 2002-2003 is additional funding for REAP/SRS-eligible LEAs. Additional funds are to be provided directly from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) to the LEA. In general, the amount of additional funds for an individual LEA will range from \$20,000 to \$60,000 (based on the LEA's ADA) less the amounts the LEA received the previous year under the "old law" for Title II, Title IV, Title VI and Reduced Class Size.

Accountability -- LEAs that participate in REAP/SRS must administer an assessment that is consistent with the requirements of Title I, must meet the SEA's definition of adequate yearly progress (AYP), and must report on the change in student academic achievement, change in student dropout rates, and other factors to help determine improvements in academic achievement.

Subpart 2 Rural Low Income (RLI) Eligibility -- Eligible LEAs are those that: (a) are not eligible under Subpart 1 REAP/SRS, (b) serve only schools with an NCES school locale code of 6, 7 or 8, and (c) have a child poverty rate of at least 20 percent (i.e., at least 20 percent of the children aged 5-17 that are served by the LEA are from families with income below the poverty line).

Use of funds -- authorizes the LEA to use the additional funds for teacher recruitment and retention, professional development, educational technology, parental involvement activities, Safe and Drug-Free Schools activities, Language Instruction activities, and/or Title I Part A activities. An LEA must participate in a given title before it can use REAP/RLI funds for activities under that title.

Funding -- As part of the local ESEA Consolidated Application, REAP/RLI-eligible LEAs can apply for a portion of the state allocation of federal RLI funding. The formula for determining individual LEA allocations is based on the ratio of the REAP/RLI-eligible LEA's ADA to the total ADA of all REAP/RLI-eligible LEAs in the state. The total funding available in Montana for the 2002-2003 school year is \$458,056.

Accountability -- LEAs that participate in REAP/RLI must administer an assessment that is consistent with the requirements of Title I, must meet the SEA's definition of adequate yearly progress (AYP), and must report on the change in student academic achievement, change in student dropout rates, and other factors to help determine improvements in academic achievement.

Questions?

If you have questions about the Rural Education Initiative (commonly called REAP) and specifically referred to as Title VI Part B Subpart 1 and Subpart 2, please call or e-mail Michael Hall
e-mail: mhall@state.mt.us
phone: 406-444-4422